

## High school students get stem cell experience in California labs

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UC Davis interns Rex Reyes, Jaskaran Dhillon, Thomas Gepts and Kalani Ratnasiri

Last week CIRM gathered together the Creativity Award interns to learn about their summer projects. These high school students came from UC Davis, UC San Francisco, UC Santa Barbara and Stanford to congregate at the Children's Hospital Oakland, home of CIRM board member Bert Lubin.

The goal of the awards was to give high school students experience in research labs, and to encourage those students to think broadly about science with the idea that novel therapies will come from creative thinking. The students all carried out additional projects in humanities or other areas of science. (We blogged about the program [here](#).)

The students I met were incredible, and I'm apparently not the only person to think so. Charlie Casey at UC Davis did a story about the program quoting Jan Nolta, who directs the school's Institute for Regenerative Cures.

“These students truly exceeded our expectations,” said Jan Nolta, director of the UCD Institute for Regenerative Cures and a mentor for several of the students. “One of our other interns was so determined to learn about stem cell science that he traveled two hours from Vallejo and back each day to work in our Sacramento lab.”

“All of these young people performed fabulously, and they represent a very bright future for science, particularly, I hope, in stem cell research.”

The Sacramento Bee wrote about the four UC Davis interns.

“Program directors selected the students based on their award-winning presentations of biotechnology concepts on websites they designed for UCD's 2011 Teen Biotech Challenge.

The four took a course in the procedures and techniques of stem cell production with master's-degree students from California State University, Sacramento, and worked on individual projects with scientist mentors.

When I talked to Gerhard Bauer, who taught that master's-level course, he said the high school students held their own among those more senior students. It'll be a while before we know where these students end up. For now, it's exciting to see high school students—many from lower socioeconomic homes—get excited about college and about the potential for stem cell research.

A.A.

Tags: creativity awards, University of California Davis, nolta, bauer

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